United Nations A/CONF.192/6

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 July 2001

Original: English

**United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects**
9-20 July 2001

## Letter dated 9 July 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

I have the honour to forward the statement of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the occasion of Small Arms Destruction Day, 9 July 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Mladenovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

01-45013 (E) 110701

## Annex to the letter dated 9 July 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

## Statement of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

On the occasion of Small Arms Destruction Day, 9 July 2001, and the beginning of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to emphasize the importance that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia attaches to international efforts to suppress the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Illegal possession of arms and, in particular, their smuggling and the arming of terrorist and organized crime groups pose a global problem today, calling for coordinated action and cooperation among all States. Widespread and ready availability of these types of weapon to a large number of individuals constitute one of the most serious threats to the life and security of citizens, as well as a direct threat to the stability of a number of countries and regions. This is particularly evident in the regions burdened by conflicts and tensions, among which is South-East Europe. This is evinced by these devastating data: in more than 45 various conflicts worldwide since 1990, preponderant use has been made of small arms and light weapons; it is estimated that over 300 million pieces of these arms and weapons have been in circulation; and the number of victims of the use of these types of weapon in armed conflicts, as well as in criminal or terrorist activities, amounts to about 300,000 each year.

In an attempt to render yet another concrete contribution to the consolidation of stability and the strengthening of confidence in the region of South-East Europe, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has decided to begin continued action to destroy the excess quantities of small arms and light weapons, primarily those seized from smugglers, terrorists and other unauthorized users. In that way, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has embarked upon a concrete implementation of the document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on small arms and light weapons, adopted on 24 November 2000, on the eve of the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Vienna, the first OSCE document to which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia acceded after its return to this important European organization. By affirming its commitment to abide fully by all OSCE provisions, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has also joined those countries that will be the first to render a specific contribution to the implementation of the goals of the document, which calls for the reduction and prevention of excessive and destabilizing stockpiling and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms.

In line with its policy of transparency and active international cooperation, including in military and security fields, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will invite observers from OSCE participating States and the representatives of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre in Vienna and the OSCE Mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to attend a weapons destruction exercise.

The use of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons threaten the security of the region of South-East Europe, in particular, primarily in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia and Macedonia. The victims are, as a rule, innocent and unprotected civilians or members of security forces, while the perpetrators are mostly members of paramilitary or terrorist groups. Therefore, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expresses special interest in destroying these types of weapons and placing them under control, as well as preventing the illicit trade in these weapons as an important element in strengthening the stability in the region.

In that context, the envisaged action of the destruction of excess quantities of weapons is expected to lead to further and intensified regional efforts in this field. to that end, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will cooperate, fully implementing its obligations under OSCE documents, with neighbouring countries, in particular those within the Stability Pact. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia expects other countries from the region and beyond to make their contribution through concrete action to the suppression of the illicit trade in, and the establishment of strict control over, small arms and light weapons.